

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-05
L-03 MCE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00
OMB-01 TRSE-00 /080 W
-----071991 121513Z /53

R 101620Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9105

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMABASSY BAMAKO 599

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

US MISSION USUN NY 693

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 643

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MR

SUBJ: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIAN ARMS PURCHASES

REF: A) DAKAR DAO IR-6-886-0011-78(NOTAL), B) LISBON 1460(NOTAL)

C) LONDON 2379 (NOTAL), D) NOUAKCHOTT 198 (.95-))

SUMMARY : DURING PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT (GIRM)
HAS BEEN ACTIVELY ARRANGING PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL ARMS INCLUDING
THREE ADDITIONAL DEFENDERS FOR AIR FORCE. FINANCING APPARENTLY
NO PROBLEM. END SUMMARY

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1. IN EARLY FEBRUARY GIRM SIGNED CONTRACT TO PURCHASE THREE
ADDITIONAL BRITTEN NORMAN AIRCRAFT (REF A). FIRST AIRCRAFT WAS
DELIVERED IN LATE FEBRUARY, SECOND AIRCRAFT ARRIVED MARCH 8 AND
THIRD AIRCRAFT SCHEDULED ARRIVE IN NEXT 10 DAYS. CREW THAT
FERRIED DEFENDER TO NOUAKCHOTT ON MARCH 8 WILL FLY GIRM DEFENDER
BACK TO BRITTEN NORMAN FACTORY FOR REPAIRS AND SECOND GIRM

DEFENDER WILL BE FLOWN TO BRITAIN FOR OVERHAUL
IN NEAR FUTURE. THUS, GIRM AIR FORCE SHOULD SHORTLY INCLUDE SIX
OPERATIONAL DEFENDERS (INCLUDING 3 NEW AND 2 OVERHAULEDWHM ACCORD-
ING TO VISITING BRITISH DIPLOMAT FROM DAKAR (BRITISH DO NOOZAVE
EMBASSY IN NOUAKCHOTT, BUT UK AMBASSADOR IN DAKAR IS ACCREDITED TO
MAURITANIA. BRITTEN NORMAN MECHANICS WHO INSPECTED NOUAKCHOTT REPAIR
FACILITIES STATED THAT GIRM AIR FORCE HAS A SURPRISINGLY LARGE
AMOUNT OF SPARE PARTS FOR DEFENDERS IN NOUAKCHOTT. IN ADDITION, PLANE
THAT ARRIVED MARCH 8 CARRIED LARGE ASSORTMENT OF ADDITIONAL SPARE
PARTS. BRITTEN NORMAN MECHANICS STATED THAT MAINTENANCE SERVICING OF
DEFENDERS, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS DONE BY FRENCH MECHANICS, IS BELOW
STANDARD. BRITISH EMBOFF MENTIONED THAT MAURITANIANS HAD
APPROACHED BRITISH FIRMS AS REGARDS PURCHASE OF LIGHT TANKS.

2. MAURITANIAN SOURCES INDICATED THAT RECENT ARRANGEMENT TO
PURCHASE MACHINE GUNS IN EUROPE (PROBABLE SALE REFERRED TO REFS
B & C) HAS ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES AND GIRM DOES NOT EXPECT
DELIVERY TO BE MADE. GIRM NOW ATTEMPTING TO LOCATE ADDITIONAL
SOURCE 50-CALIBER MACHINE GUNS.

3. IN SPITE OF THE STRAITENED CONDITION OF ITS OWN
EXCHEQUER, MAURITANIA STILL SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO OBTAIN QUICK
AND EASY FINANCING OF ARMS PURCHASES.
IT APPEARS THAT ARAB FRIENDS (SAUDI ARABIA) DEPOSIT FUNDS IN
EUROPEAN ACCOUNT (PARIS) TO COVER ARMS PURCHASE COST.
DEFENDER AND MACHINE GUN PURCHASES MENTIONED ABOVE APPARENTLY
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ON STRAIGHT CASH BASIS. AS DISCUSSED REFTTEL D, FINANCING OF
16.4MILLION DOLLARS FOR PURCHASE OF PUCARAS WAS APPARENTLY
ARRANGED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. KRYZA

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